

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 02257 231757Z
ACTION ARA-14

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TAGS: PINT, HA
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT DUVALIER PRESSES ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 1960

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: WITH PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER IN THE LEAD, THE PACE OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS HAS DRAMATICALLY INCREASED IN RECENT WEEKS. PUTTING HIS PERSONAL PRESTIGE ON THE LINE MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, THE PRESIDENT FIRED SCORES OF EMPLOYEES IN TWO MAJOR DEPARTMENTS AND HE AND HIS MINISTERS HAVE CONDUCTED NUMEROUS ON-THE-SPOT INSPECTIONS. WHILE NOT CONCLUSIVE IN THEMSELVES, THESE STEPS OFFER ENCOURAGING EVIDENCE THAT THE PRESIDENT IS BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT CHANGE REQUIRES STRONG ACTION AND THAT PAST POLITICAL SERVICES CAN NO LONGER SANCTIFY INCOMPETENCE. END SUMMARY

2. THE HAITIAN BUREAUCRACY HAS BEEN JOLTED IN THE PAST THREE WEEKS BY ALMOST UNPRECEDENTED ACTIVITY ON THE PART OF PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER AND THE ABLE NEW MINISTERS HE APPOINTED TO THE GOVERNMENT ON MAY 28 (REFTEL). THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF VISITED THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS MAY 31 AND FIRED 12 ENGINEERS. ON JUNE 16, 46 EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVERNMENT

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PAGE 02 PORT A 02257 231757Z

TELEPHONE COMPANY (TELECO) WERE GIVEN THE SACK.
COMMENT: TELECO WAS NOTORIOUSLY OVERSTAFFED AND THE OBJECT OF VASTLY INFLATED CONTRACTS FOR NEW EQUIPMENT. DONASSON ALPHONSE, WHO WAS APPOINTED IN THE LAST MAJOR GOVERNMENTAL SHAKE-UP LAST SEPTEMBER, CONTINUES AS TELECO DIRECTOR BUT THE MANAGEMENT HAS BEEN REALIGNED. THE ENGINEERS FIRED AT PUBLIC WORKS WERE CONSIDERED CORRUPT, AN

MINISTER ST. COME
IS TRYING TO STREAMLINE HIS DEPARTMENT AND GET ITS ENGINEERS
OUT OF THE BUSINESS OF CONTRACTING FOR THEIR OWN PROJECTS.

3. ON JUNE 10 THE PRESIDENT, ACCOMPANIED BY THE NEW MINISTERS
OF AGRICULTURE AND PUBLIC WORKS, TRAVELLED TO LES CAYES AND
PORT SALUT IN THE EXTREME SOUTHWEST OF THE COUNTRY TO EXAMINE
PROGRESS ON THE IDB-FINANCED ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTION. ALONG
THE WAY HE MADE NUMEROUS STOPS TO HEAR COMPLAINTS, AND VISIT
INSTITUTIONS AND PROJECTS. THE PRESIDENT HAS ALSO RECENTLY
PAID SURPRISE VISITS TO GENERAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE HAITIAN
ARMY, TO THE AIR FORCE AND TO THE ARMY'S CORPS OF ENGINEERS.

4. THE NEWLY APPOINTED MINISTERS HAVE ALSO TACKLED THEIR
RESPONSIBILITIES VIGOROUSLY. IN HIS FIRST WEEK ON THE JOB,
MINISTER JEANTY VISITED ALL THE PORT AU PRINCE RADIO AND TV
STATIONS AS WELL AS THE TWO WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS WHICH HAVE
PIONEERED THE INCREASED PRESS FREEDOM OF RECENT YEARS; AT
EACH STOP HE PLEDGED TOTAL COOPERATION WITH THE "FOURTH ESTATE."
JEANTY ALSO WARNED HIS EMPLOYEES THAT THOSE WHO DO NOT REPORT
TO WORK ON TIME WILL BE FIRED. PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER ST. COME
INSPECTED THE NORTH ROAD AND CONSULTED WITH OFFICIALS IN
CAP HAITIEN. COMMERCE MINISTER CHARLOT VISITED THE MUCH-
CRITICIZED POSTAL SERVICE.

5. SUPPORTING THE EARLIER MINISTERIAL CHANGES, THE GOH
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PAGE 03 PORT A 02257 231757Z

APPOINTED TWO WELL-QUALIFIED MEN AT THE BUDGET OFFICE IN THE
MINISTRY OF FINANCE. JACQUES SIMEON WAS PROMOTED FROM DEPUTY
DIRECTOR TO SUCCEED ALBERT CHARLOT WHO IS NOW MINISTER OF
COMMERCE. THE NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR IS A DYNAMIC AND HARD-HEADED
YOUNG ECONOMIST, DANIEL GEORGES, WHO SPENT THE FIRST THREE MONTHS
OF THIS YEAR IN AN IMF-SPONSORED FISCAL MANAGEMENT COURSE IN
WASHINGTON. GEORGES IS DETERMINED TO INCREASE THE RESOURCES
ALLOCATED TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

6. COMMENT: BEGINNING APRIL 22, WHEN PRESIDENT DUVALIER
ANNOUNCED HE INTENDED TO STAY IN OFFICE, AND CONTINUING WITH
THE EXCELLENT AND MUCH NEEDED MINISTERIAL CHANGES MAY 28,
THESE LATEST ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS OFFER REFRESHING INDICA-
TIONS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS PASSED THROUGH A PERIOD OF
INDECISION AND SELF-DOUBT (MARCH-APRIL) AND HAS ACCEPTED THE
RESPONSIBILITIES OF MORE ASSERTIVE LEADERSHIP REQUIRED BY
HAITI'S SEVERE ECONOMIC STRAITS. THE CONFIDENCE HE HAS
APPARENTLY BESTOWED ON HIS NEW APPOINTEES HAS LED TO UNUSUALLY
BOLD AND AUSPICIOUS MINISTERIAL INITIATIVES.
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